DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 053 TM 035 291

AUTHOR	Neufeld, Barbara; Kuwahara, Yuri; Swanson, Judy
TITLE	Update Report: Implementing Standards-Based Reform in San Diego City Schools.
PUB DATE	2000-02-15
NOTE	30p.; Produced by Education Matters. For a related report, see TM 035 293.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Change; Middle Schools; Peer Counseling; *Principals; Program Evaluation; *Program Implementation; *Staff Development; Teachers
IDENTIFIERS	*Collegial Coaching; *San Diego Unified School District CA

ABSTRACT

As part of a school reform program, focused initially on literacy the San Diego City Schools decided to create the position of school-based staff developer. Creating this position proved to be a daunting challenge, with considerable disagreement between the union and the school district. Data were collected about the early implementation of the staff developer role in middle schools through interviews with 14 staff developers, 15 principals who work with the staff developers, 2 principals without a staff developer, and 1 principal with a staff developer who began work later in the school year. Findings suggest that the initial implementation of the staff developer position has been very successful from the viewpoint of both staff developers and principals. Overall, staff developers thought that the new role would enable them to grow personally and to have a schoolwide impact on teaching and learning. They considered themselves reasonably well prepared for the new position by their initial formal training, and they felt that they had a much greater understanding of the new literacy framework. All thought that it was essential for them to grain the trust of the teachers, to ensure that they were not regarded as spies for the administration. Staff developers also reported that they usually have more demands on their time than they can fulfill. Principals thought that the position has gotten off to a strong start. The questionnaires also identified some areas in which staff developers and principals believe more training is needed. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 481 053

Update Report: Implementing Standards-Based Reform in San Diego City Schools

Written By

Barbara Neufeld

Yuri Kuwahara and Judy Swanson

February 15, 2000

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Neufeld

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Education Matters, Inc.
Cambridge, MA

TM035291

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

During the 1998-1999 school year, under the new leadership of Superintendent Alan Bersin and Chancellor Tony Alvarado, the San Diego City Schools (SDCS) began an ambitious program of school reform focused, initially, on literacy. Through the newly created Institute for Learning, and with the support of the Instructional Leaders (ILs), principals and teachers were directed to implement a set of literacy approaches embodied in the Literacy Framework that were designed to help all children reach acceptable standards of literacy achievement. As teachers and principals focused on learning to use the approaches, the district strove to create the position of school-based staff developer to help them in their efforts. The district hoped to place in each school staff developers who were highly skilled teachers who had been trained to provide ongoing support to teachers as they worked to implement the Literacy Framework. Creating this position proved to be a daunting challenge to the new district administration and, as a result, staff developers were not in place during the last school year.

At the time of our site visit last spring (May 1999), just after the district and San Diego Educators Association (SDEA) reached an agreement on how to select and implement this role, we spoke to teachers who were still upset by the emotional strain of the year-long district/union struggle over the position. Among teachers who supported the school-based staff developer position, some said that they were not sure they would apply for the position for fear of seeming to side with the district against the union. Others said that they were not sure that their colleagues would welcome staff developers into their schools and classrooms for the same reason. They pondered about how staff developers would do their work in what might be a hostile school environment.

As a result of the great potential for the staff developer position to support improved literacy teaching and learning, and with the agreement of the district, we focused our data collection efforts during December 1999 on learning about early implementation of the staff developer role. We did not believe that we could get a broad enough perspective on the role by attending only to the four schools that have been the focus of our previous work in the district. Therefore, with the agreement and support of the district, the Institute identified a sample of 14 staff developers who worked with a total of 17 schools as our interview sample. The staff developers fully represented the range of middle schools in the district. During the week of December 6, 1999, Education Matters researchers interviewed the 14 staff developers, as well as 15 principals who work with these staff developers.[1] In addition, we spoke with two principals who did not have staff developers and one who had a staff developer who began her work late in November after being trained in the alternative path to the position. In these interviews, we were interested in learning about the ways in which the staff developers had been selected at the district and school levels, how they were formally prepared for their work, what their work entailed and how they were implementing their role during the first few months of the school year. We also wanted to know how principals worked with the staff developers and with teachers to help support

[1]Certified staff developers had begun their work at the start of the 1999-2000 school year.

implementation of the role and the Literacy Framework. Finally, we spoke to principals and ILs to get an update on how their work was helping to support the overall goals of implementing the literacy framework and improving teaching and learning.[2]

This update report provides a summary of what we learned from our interviews with staff developers and principals. Unlike our previous work, we do not situate our findings in specific school contexts. This is because a) we made a considered decision to explore the scope of implementation across the district, and b) we could not, in this round of data collection, include teachers' views of the staff developers' work. Because we need teachers' views to fully evaluate the early phase of implementation, we plan to return to the district in the spring to talk to teachers about a) working with the staff developers and b) trying to implement new literacy approaches. However, we can say with assurance that the data we collected and analyzed demonstrate a very successful initial implementation of the staff developer role at the middle school level from the perspectives of staff developers and principals. We think this is an important finding that bodes well for the future of the role. In the main section of this report, II. Early Implementation of the Staff Developer Role, we detail the findings that lead to this conclusion. In section III, we review our findings and conclude with several issues the district might consider as it moves forward with its ambitious and important agenda.

II. EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPER ROLE

At the outset of our inquiry, we asked teachers why they had applied to be staff developers. We were curious about the aspects of the role that appealed to them and what they had done in their roles as teachers that led them to think that this new role would be challenging and fulfilling. Most staff developers in our sample were not completely new to working with other teachers in a leadership role. They had been mentors to new teachers; they had been trained as facilitators of school-based initiatives such as First Steps; they had worked scoring the district's literacy portfolios; and they had been providers of professional development in their own schools and in the larger district context. Staff developers who were taking courses toward their administrative certificate felt that implementing the staff developer role would enhance their future work as principals. Overall, staff developers reported that this role would be an enormous opportunity for them to grow personally while enabling them to have a schoolwide impact on teaching and learning. They looked forward to the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers and help create a culture of collaboration in the middle schools. Staff developers worried a bit about leaving direct work with students, but felt that they would have sufficient opportunities to teach when they modeled lessons associated with the literacy framework.

---

[2]Our conversations with IL's are critical for understanding the scope of the reform effort. As we have focused this report on the role of the staff developers, a role with which the IL's do not have a direct involvement, we will discuss the work of the IL's in our annual report (August, 2000).

Everyone with whom we spoke felt that the selection process had been reasonable and fair.[3] They reported that the San Diego State University faculty who implemented the process were well organized and quite thorough. Although staff developers were not happy about how late in the year some aspects of the selection process took place – particularly the observations of their own teaching – they recognized that this was a result of the timing of the final agreement between the SDCS and the SDEA. A few staff developers commented on the artificiality of a) responding to a video tape of teaching and b) simulating a group professional development session in front of only two people. However, again, they recognized the importance of SDSUs attention to their abilities to do this kind of work and the limits of creating "real life" situations for each of the candidates. Finally, although staff developers said the work with SDSU took a long time, they recognized that it made clear the criteria by which they would be evaluated in the selection process.

Many of the staff developers had been chosen for the role by a school prior to their going through the formal selection process run by SDSU. They talked about the ways in which their principals, and sometimes their colleagues, had encouraged them to apply for the position. Staff developers described processes in which members of their school governance team held formal interviews with them and with other candidates prior to their screening by SDSU. Schools then made decisions about the individuals they would like to have in this important new role. Through this process, many potential staff developers knew where they would work if they were certified by SDSU. As a counterpoint to this situation, however, some schools did not know whether they would have staff developers if a) none of their teachers wanted to apply for the position, and
b) teachers from other schools did not choose them as a potential work site.[4]

Prior to the start of the schoolyear, certified staff developers participated in two weeks of professional development designed to get them ready for their initial work at the schools. According to the staff developers, this professional development provided them with knowledge of a) the literacy framework, b) the role of the peer coach, c) issues that might develop in working with principals, and d) how to begin their work. Still, staff developers varied in the extent to which they thought this initial training was a) sufficient, b) targeted on the right priorities, and
c) focused sufficiently on literacy issues in the middle and high schools. We offer two representative comments on these issues.

One of the things that I think I really learned in that initial two weeks was why

---

[3]We did not speak with applicants who were not selected and/or certified. Therefore, we do not have their views on the reasonableness and fairness of the selection and certification process.

[4]In fact, some of the staff developers selected by the schools were not later certified by SDSU and the number of certified staff developers was not equal to the number of available positions. As a result, some middle schools began the year without a staff developer. The district then developed an alternate route to the staff developer position which did not include SDSU certification but enabled schools to have, in a sense, provisionally certified staff developers for most of the 1999-2000 school year.

*they chose the framework they chose, and that helped me a great deal. Because when the literacy framework was presented to us last year, there was not enough of the **why** piece there for me, and there was definitely not enough of the **why** piece there for a lot of teachers at our school. "Why are we doing this? Who cares?" A lot of people were holding out on "It's just going to go away." When you really look at the literacy framework, it is based on best practice, and if you teach teachers best practice, and it's based on research and what we know about literacy learning, it shouldn't go away. It should change as the research changes, but the teachers don't understand that piece, and it's feeling like an untaught piece. Anyway, that's the best thing I got out of those first two weeks. We were also supposed to be getting information on coaching, although I think that that was a weaker component of the training, and I still don't feel like we've had enough training in coaching,...specifically some of the problems. Because for one thing, it wasn't unknown that this was a controversial position. I think that that should have been fronted with some training on how to deal with those controversial topics. How to go in and deal with teachers who are making a point not to work with the coaches because of the union/district issues even when they know in their best professional judgment it's good.... I've been at my school for a while. I know the culture here. I think I have a good sense of how my colleagues perceive me, but even I was a little bit nervous about how the district and union issues were going to play out in my new role. Staff Developer 1*

I thought some of the training was valuable, when they had trainers who were focusing on genre studies, in particular, because that was what we're doing at the middle schools, working with teachers in the genre studies. But the in-services on reading strategies were focused on elementary models, as opposed to a secondary model, and so that was not quite as useful for me, or to work with teachers at the middle school, using that kind of model. The reading strategies were excellent strategies, but they might not look just like the elementary model and there seems to be somewhat of a narrow focus in trying to have it look the same across K-12, and not looking at the middle school and high school as having somewhat different needs or having that model look different in those grade levels. So part of the training was useful and part of the training was not. Staff Developer 2

Despite these concerns about their initial formal training, and despite normal apprehension about beginning a role that would be new for them, for teachers, and for principals, staff developers reported that they were reasonably prepared to begin their work by the end of the summer. They had a much greater understanding of the literacy framework, a focus on starting their work with genre studies teachers, and the beginnings of working relations with their principals. In the remainder of this section, we turn our attention to: A) how staff developers began their work, B) the parameters of the role as it evolved in the first few months, C) the interactions of staff developers and principals to forward the literacy agenda, D) the challenges staff developers face in fully implementing their roles, E) the value of on-going staff developer professional development, and E) conclusions about the early implementation phase of this role.

A. Area of Getting Started, Organizing and Defining the Role

Although the role of staff developer was developed at the district level, the question of how to initiate the position at each school had to be figured out locally by staff developers and principals in interaction with teachers. As one staff developer noted, doing her new job was a bit like beginning to teach. In her teacher education course, she had learned lots of bits and pieces, she had even student taught. However, it was only when she was "on her own" that she realized all of the uncertainties that she had to address as a teacher. To varying extents, staff developers faced the same situation. At the outset, many reported that they were not quite sure whether they were implementing the role correctly, whether they were providing too little or too much support for teachers, whether their approach to the role bore much resemblance to what their colleagues were doing. Some staff developers felt this uncertainty was a normal part of the job; others wished for more initial guidance. Still, our data suggest that staff developers have moved beyond this initial stage of uncertainty to greater clarity about what they can and should do.

Regardless of their degree of comfort with the uncertainties of the role, all staff developers reported that the first thing they needed to do was gain the trust of the teachers with whom they would be working. This was most important where the staff developer was new to the school and to the principal. But it was also important in schools where the staff developer was a former teacher who had now taken on a new role. All staff developers reported that it was essential for them to make clear that they were not "spies for the administration," that they were not going to be involved in teacher evaluation.

> *My first day on the job, I stood up in front of my teachers and said, "This is my new role. I took this job because...teachers and students are my passion."...I told them I thought long and hard about whether I would even take this job. There were certain guidelines for myself that I would not cross...I told them, "I will not share my notes I takes in your class. That's for you and for me, and if I'm asked, the answer is no." I told them, "This is what I will do. This is what I won't do, and if I go back on my word, I want all of you to call me on it." I think that was good starting place. Staff Developer 1*

> *I started off the year, at least that first week, I made it a point to go through, and walk into everybody's classroom regardless of whether they were genre block or English, just to touch base, and I really worked on trying create a non-threatening environment, and make sure to differentiate my role from the administrators. I am not here to evaluate. Although it's very difficult to separate evaluation from growth, I try and make sure that they have an understanding that this not something I'm going back to report to the principal. Staff Developer 3*

Principals reported that they and their staff developers worked hard to make it clear to teachers that staff developers were not going to be extensions of the administration nor were they going to play any role in teacher evaluation. To insure that there is no confusion about the differences in

their roles, at some schools, principals and staff developers intentionally do not observe classrooms at the same time.

From the perspective of the staff developers and principals with whom we spoke, the initial trust-building phase of introducing the role went well.[5] Although, as expected, not all teachers were eager to work with them, staff developers were able to begin the work of focusing on genre studies teachers and developing some schoolwide professional development sessions. Overall, our data lead us to the following conclusions about the early phase of implementing the staff developer role.

1. **We found evidence from our sample of staff developers that they were having reasonable levels of success gaining access to teachers and providing them with peer coaching. We found no evidence that they were having significant difficulty doing their job because of teacher resistance**. The district had encouraged them to begin their work a) with genre studies teachers and b) with teachers who were interested in working with them. The rationale behind this strategy was that news of the benefit of the staff developer would grow from these early interventions and would encourage others to seek their advice.

   I began with teachers who are willing to work. It's not a good idea to start with the one who is the most resistant, or the new teacher who doesn't know anything. [It's] best to start with those that are really eager, have some idea of what's happening and set them up as models, perhaps. Get them going and strong, and then others see the positiveness of the whole thing. Let them watch that. That was valuable information [from the district]. I agree with that; I think that's how it has to happen. Staff Developer 4

Some principals encouraged staff developers to work with a wider range of teachers, often those who are new to teaching, and this has been possible in a number of schools.

There's all different kinds of reasons [I work with different teachers]. Some of them, because they've asked me to come in and work with them. Then there is one teacher that is new, and needs a lot of help, and he has asked me, and the principal has asked also to work with him. There was another teacher that has not been to the genre studies training, and is very resistant to most of this. She's kind of difficult to work with. She's the one that I modeled the lessons for, and I went into her room, and we rearranged furniture, and we did a lot of things. She was willing to listen to me on that. I've to get back into her classroom now, and see whether she's putting any of it into practice. I'm going to give her a little time, and then I'm going to go back in and see whether she's approximating any of these things I asked her to do. There's different reasons for going in there. At

---

[5] As staff developers begin to work with teachers who are resistant to their help, they are likely to face new the challenges as they try to build trusting, collegial relations with another set of teachers.

the other site, mostly I work with them, because they've asked for help. Or they want me to work with them. When I'm not working with somebody, then I just start visiting again to see how we're doing, and then usually in the course of my visiting or dropping in, things will come up, and then I go back and work on that, and that's just kind of the routine that I've got up for myself. Staff Developer 5

In other instances, staff developers expressed a desire to work with teachers who they see as in need of coaching support. Because these teachers do not ask for help or welcome it when it is unsolicited, staff developers have not yet been able to provide them with peer coaching. Principals note that some teachers are reluctant to open their doors to staff developers for a number of reasons including lingering concerns about their potential role in evaluation and, for experienced teachers who are deemed expert by many at the school, doubts about whether the staff developer has anything worthwhile to offer them.

Finally, we want to note that staff developers report having plenty of teachers with whom to work. More often than not, they have more demands on their time than they can fulfill. This, we would argue, is good news for the early phase of implementation of the role.

2. **Staff developers who spend four days with their school report that they have more time available to work with content area teachers than do staff developers who spend only two days in each school.** Staff developers spend either two or four days in a school, a time allocation that reflects the numbers of students in the school who score in Q1 and Q2 on the SAT9.[6] As we will discuss in the section on "challenges" for the staff developer, having two days in a school seems to preclude the possibility of doing anthing more than working with genre studies and providing some whole-faculty professional development.

3. **In a number of schools that we visited, the principal used site-based funds to enable a staff developer who would have been supported part-time by the district to be at the school full-time.** This was seen as extremely beneficial by the staff developers and the principals for two reasons: 1) some of them would not have taken the job if they had had to split their time between schools, and, 2) working full-time enables them to support a larger number of teachers, including those who work in the content areas. Staff developers who spend four days/week in their schools as a result of such principal decisions, speak positively about having time to help content area teachers learn how to use accountable talk and read alouds in ways effective for the content they teach. Content teachers, then, are in a better position to support implementation of the literacy framework.

---

[6]During this schoolyear, there is a maximum of one full-time (4 days/week) staff developer in schools with large numbers of students in Q1-Q2 regardless of the absolute number of students in those categories. According to principals, staff developers, and ILs, it is clear that, due to the large number of students in these categories, some schools would benefit from having more than one full-time staff developer.

4. **The principal of Wilson Academy did a thorough budget and personnel analysis and found ways to use school-site funds and positions a) to expand the number of literacy staff developers on site to four by changing the job descriptions of existing personnel and reallocating funds -- for example, the middle level reading teacher and site compensatory education resource teachers had their job duties redistributed and their new focus became that of a staff developer, and b) to create similar positions focused on the needs of English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education students on campus.** With respect to "a," site funds pay for the second certified staff developer's school-based work, and the district permits this staff developer to participate in the district's professional development for certified staff developers. The ELL- and Special Education-focused staff developers, who began their work after the start of the current school year, participate in the district's weekly professional development for the second group of staff developers. The principal made this resource allocation choice in light of the potential strength of the staff developer position and the need of Wilson's teachers – many of whom are new to the profession – for on-site professional development.[7]

Our data reveal that, despite the troubled history of the role, staff developers have been able to begin their work. They report that they are excited by their opportunities to work directly with teachers. Principals agree with these assessments, and feel that the position has gotten off to a strong start. We turn next to an overview of the specific activities in which the staff developers are engaged, a set of activities that elaborates and lends support to the conclusions of the principals and staff developers.

B. Exploring the Parameters of the Staff Developer Role

Staff developers are doing a great many things to fulfill their roles. **At the classroom level,** they: a) work with genre studies teachers to plan and implement lessons; b) work with some content area teachers to use framework strategies; c) develop/find materials and other resources; d) work with new teachers on new teacher issues as well as implementing the literacy framework;
e) encourage teachers to talk about their practice with them and with one another, f) observe classes and provide written and oral feedback after observations (although a few staff developers have not yet done this), g) provide demonstration lessons on literacy framework approaches, and h) make links between components of the framework and the portfolios and standards. **At the schoolwide level,** they: a) plan and implement professional development sessions often in collaboration with the principal, b) conduct book purchases and inventories, c) do some testing of students, d) keep logs of their work with students and teachers, and e) meet with principals to review progress and plan future work. **Over time, they are changing what**

[7]The principal of Wilson, we were told, is the only middle school principals to rework her budget to create additional staff developer positions. For that reason, we knew the school would be identifiable if we gave the example. Because we think that this approach to considering resource allocation is important, we asked for and obtained the principal's permission to use the example in this update report.

they do. Some are a) revising how they allocate time by working with one or two teachers for a concentrated span of time; b) focusing more on planning and making links between the standards and the literacy strategies; and c) providing direct instruction to students.[8] Within this range of activities, staff developers highlighted several points about their work that we want to stress.

1. **Staff developers find that many of the teachers who participated in genre studies professional development during the summer were well-prepared to move ahead with implementation.** We understand that there was considerable variation in the quality of genre professional development provided in the summer, with the second session deemed to be of very high quality. Teachers who participated in the second session, found the training to be extremely valuable for building their capacity to implement the early phase of the genre studies program. During the schoolyear, another form of genre studies professional development has been available on Saturdays. Although staff developers report that this professional development is helpful, it is by design, less thorough than that provided during the summer. Staff developers and principals report that teachers would much prefer to have this training available during the school day rather than on a Saturday.[9] Furthermore, principals and staff developers point out that space in the Saturday [sessions] is at a premium and teachers who want to participate cannot always enroll.

2. **The staff developers talk about making links/connections between the work they are doing and the overall implementation of the literacy framework, standards and the literacy assessment portfolios**. We see this as a critical component of their work and one that needs even more attention than it can get from the staff developers. We know from our previous work in the district that many teachers were unclear about the links between the standards and the literacy portfolio. Indeed, many did not fully understand the purpose, goals or implications of standards-based reform. Along with some of their principals, teachers saw standards and the portfolios as separate, even different, approaches to reform. When the district began its implementation of the literacy framework, teachers and some principals, again, saw the framework as totally new and unconnected to the standards and portfolio. They felt they were being asked "to add one more thing" to their already full plates.

   When Education Matters visited the district in December 1999, we heard principals, for

---

[8]We could provide a great many examples of how staff developers are fulfilling each of the specific activities detailed above. Such a list would provide the reader with a good picture of what the role entails as each staff developer interprets it at her school site. However, we prefer to report the highlights of what we have learned in this update report and include the specifics of the role when we have teachers' voices to add to the analysis. Therefore, in our next report, due August 31, 2000, we will provide information about a) specific staff developer activities and b) teachers' responses to them.

[9]We understand the difficulties and implications of holding such staff development during the school day. However, we think it is important to reflect teachers' (and sometimes administrators') dislike of devoting Saturdays to professional development activities.

the first time, talk about how they finally understood the links among the standards, the framework and the portfolio.[10] They described having learned this in their district professional development. Staff developers, who were in the teaching ranks just a few months earlier, reported that they, too, for the first time and as a result of their professional development, understood the overall approach to literacy reform. As a result of their more complete understanding, principals and staff developers are now in a better position to help teachers.

Because we think it is essential for the district to make clear to teachers the overall approach to literacy reform and the ways in which the various strategies and components form a coherent whole, we include here samples of the voices of principals and staff developers who spoke to this issue.[11] We begin with the voices of principals who see this as a significant obstacle to moving reform forward in their schools.

I think one of the things that may influence [how teachers respond to the parts of reform] is, it's the connectedness: how does this connect with what we're doing over here, with what we're doing over here? So, trying to connect everything [is important]. Administrator A

Viewing the approaches separately and not holistically is the number one cry. And it's not just at [my school]. I've heard this from principal colleagues of mine throughout the district. In other words, experimenting and looking at these things in isolation, [not] to see the strands together, as a whole, as driving your curriculum. I think we're getting better at that, but again, that's probably my No. 1 need in terms of training, is to continue to have teachers feel comfortable and to see it from a larger, like a macro perspective. ....We're working on the portfolio together. I don't have any resistance here, but what I have is a struggle of people to see this as an integral part of what they're doing and not as an add-on. And it's a very tough go. ....So again, I think systematically, I think it's the grandiose nature of the program, and it's very difficult for teachers to see it as something that integrates with what they're doing. Administrator B

---

[10]Principals raised serious concerns about the literacy portfolio, in particular, the reliability of the scoring process and, what they see as constant changes in the district's guidelines for portfolio entries. We did not focus our data collection on the question of portfolios, however, we know that questions about a) how students create the work that goes into the portfolio, b) how that work is scored at the district level, and c) the perception that the "rules of the game" with portfolios keep shifting frustrate many principals and lead them to think that this approach to assessing the quality of student work may be deeply flawed. In our view, portfolios provide the district with an important standards-based assessment. We urge the district to fully explore and respond to the principals' (and teachers') concerns about portfolios.

[11]One or two principals in our sample felt that they still did not understand the overall picture of literacy reform. They remain unconvinced that there is a coherent strategy that includes standards, the framework, and the literacy portfolio.

Now, we're struggling with the Institute and standards-based classroom. Somewhere, they're going to mesh, but I don't think our teachers have figured that out yet. Although if you go in our classrooms you'll see the standards posted in every classroom, etc. But tying all that together, that hasn't happened yet. Administrator C

Staff developers share similar views of the problem. For example:

The other piece that makes it difficult for teachers is that they don't see how the pieces all fit together. I think if I could just get them to truly understand how the pieces fit together, it would be so much easier, because right now--the portfolio, standards and literacy framework are like a big [?] water problem. There's three pieces floating out there, and I'm thinking in the humanities meeting that we had last week, they truly feel like it's writing above what they do in their classroom, and it's a separate thing, and "Oh, my goodness, it's portfolio time, and you have to do this." They truly don't see how that is interconnected or how to get it interconnected within their instruction. That's a problem. Staff Developer 1,

This whole program, we have been introduced to it in pieces. Teachers need to see the whole picture. I think they've got a pretty good idea of what the pieces look like, and now we need to show them how it all goes together. And so that's what I've been trying to work with a lot lately on is showing them how all of these things fit together. It's not fitting together as a whole package [yet]. Staff Developer 5

Brand-new teachers face a somewhat different challenge. As this staff developer points out, they may lack knowledge of both the components and the "big picture."

[This school] has tons of new teachers who are trying to grasp the standards, the portfolios, and all of the other things at the same time. I'm finding that I'm having to sell the strategies first, and then provide the strategies individually before actually making the connections for them. When I started with them, they hadn't done the independent reading and conferencing. So I had to do the independent reading and conferencing, because it's a very important component of shared reading. So you provide that, and then you go back, and you say, "Well this is how it relates to this part, and this is what you need to do." Staff Developer 6

Staff developers described the different strategies they are using to address the coherence of the overall reform at their schools as the next example reveals.

The portfolio component, [for example.] If a teacher wants to deal with a persuasive document for example, we're looking at public documents, we're looking at arguments. We're looking at positions, support and evidence. So you take a literacy strategy, say a read-aloud, and you read out a controversial piece

to the class. And you ask the kids for their opinions and things. You chart it, so you have those who are in support, and those who are against. Then you broaden it by asking the kids to actually give you reasons why they support it or reasons why they oppose it, and before you know it, you get the conversation going. And then you bring in the language component. You help them to realize that in the persuasive document, it's how you actually use your words that makes it persuasive. ....You [the teacher] can start with a read-aloud, and then do the shared reading, where you actually document the materials, do independent reading to look for resources to support whatever position you have. And then come back again and look at word study, choice of word, and how the choice of whatever words you've chosen to use within that text has helped you. That's what I find myself doing with the portfolio assignment [that links with the literacy framework]. Staff Developer 6

Finally, staff developers who understand the links in the approach to literacy point out ways in which they use this knowledge when working with content area teachers as well as language arts teachers.

And then [I work with] the math and science teachers. I'm working with them to say, "How can we take the literacy framework and put it into math and science classes in a way that's appropriate for math and science materials?" So, rather than taking lots of fiction and putting it in a math classroom, math does have to read procedural documents. How can we teach kids to read those procedural documents. So that's authentic for the content area. And in both of those groups, I'm working with teachers who are interested and wanting to take that on. Staff Developer 7

We agree with the principals and staff developers that it is essential for teachers to have full access to the links, to what they call the "big picture" of reform in the district.[12] Without this, it is unlikely that they will be able to fully understand and, therefore, implement the complex and comprehensive approach to literacy that the district has undertaken. Staff developers and principals are doing what they can to get these ideas in circulation at their schools. It may be necessary for the Institute to consider other forums in which these ideas can be effectively communicated to all teachers.

3. **Staff developers do not necessarily feel they have the knowledge and skill needed to address the learning needs of ESL students and their teachers and that the question of how to support their literacy needs has not been addressed at their in-service sessions. They are trying to use what they are learning with teachers of these students, but would like to know much more.** The challenges include: having appropriate materials and pedagogy to work with ESL students, especially when they are

[12]The ILs with whom we spoke also stressed the need for teachers and principals to a)integrate the components of the Literacy Framework, and b) integrate the Framework with the standards and the portfolios.

"bridging" into mainstream classes; the very large size of some ESL classes which makes meeting individual needs very difficult; and, working with students who have been in ESL programs for their entire school careers. Staff developers expressed concerns about the importance of attending to the learning needs of these students, but felt they did not have sufficient training in this area.

With respect to their own lack of knowledge and skill, staff developers noted the following:

> *It's not something that's been addressed in the Fridays [staff developer sessions]. We expect [ESL teachers] to still do the literacy framework, but to alter it in order to better meet the needs [of their students]. That much hasn't even been said, [though]. There hasn't been any discussion, which is surprising given that there's a large percentage of the district as a whole that is English language learner. Staff Developer 7*

> *I haven't been a lot of help to two of the teachers. One of the second language teachers, I've done some conferencing with, and did a shared reading with, and we talked about the progress. I think there's an insecurity of what that should look like with those students. Staff Developer 8*

> *As a staff developer, I don't know a whole lot about it. My knowledge comes from listening to them, and testing the kids. I did test all the kids in the classroom on a one-to-one, so I kind of know their reading levels. I'm learning right along with the teacher on how best to handle their curriculum. I do have an advantage in that I do have a reading background. So that helps, but I know that all staff developers don't. I have a reading credential, so I can look at a child, and I can help them decide on a way to help them become better readers. There's also a lot I don't know about how those kids learn their language. Staff Developer 4*

With respect to class size, several staff developers made comments similar to the following:

> *The [school name] ESL teachers, one class you've got like 36 students in it or 38, I can't remember which, and they're beginning English learners, many different languages. They have aides, but still, those class sizes are way, way too large. Staff Developer 9*

With respect to how long some middle school students have been in ESL programs, we heard the following kinds of comments:

> *One of the problems that we have, we have very few true beginners at our school. We have a lot of what I call the "lifers," the ones that had been here since kindergarten, ESL. Staff Developer 11*

> *I think that a lot of times we do our ESL students a real disservice the way we*

handle them in the system. This teacher that I said was having a real hard time, she has a class of ESL beginning and intermediate students combined. So often those classes are the largest classes, which they shouldn't be. I sometimes think we don't always give them to our best teachers, which is what we should be doing. This is the first time that I've really been involved at the beginning [ESL] class, and I thought it would be most of the kids that are new to this country. I tested all of the kids, and I gave them the San Diego Quick, and then I think I did some of the other tests to help [the teacher] assess their reading levels, and then I interviewed each one of them. I asked every one of them, whether they had been born in this country. I would say 80 to 90 percent of those students were born in this country, and have attended schools in this country, mostly here in San Diego all of their lives, and yet they're still reading at 1st and 2nd grade reading levels. Staff Developer 5

Finally, staff developers are aware that the approach to helping improve the literacy skills of ESL students must include more than the set of reading strategies detailed in the framework, as this staff developer notes.

I taught second language. There are many problems. It's not just that they can't read at that level, but there's a lot of cultural issues that have to be addressed. Being aware of the type of teaching you have to do, you have to slow the reading down, in a sense give it more time. You have your visual and your audio, and you have to use them all in your approach. Because until the student feels comfortable to share and to read and do that, there's not going to be very much growth. It's a different world. It's more complex than in the regular classroom, where you can get deeper, and get them to think deeper, You have to train them, but you're dealing with the same language. In the ESL classroom, they are learning culture, the culture of the language, of the country, of the school, because in the ESL classroom, you have two different cultures all together. And there's still again the factor of being safe, to venture out into the new language. That is an area that I think we'll need a little more time. Staff Developer 10

Principals also reported that they face major challenges in providing services to English language learners. They report that the challenges are especially acute in schools with highly transient, high poverty student populations, and more generally, when students are transitioned into mainstream classes. While efforts are being made to provide support for and to monitor the progress of such students, in some schools, principals report, the programs provided are basically the same as those provided for native English speakers. Principals and staff developers are not convinced that this is all that ESL students need to sufficiently enhance their literacy knowledge and skill.

In light of these findings, we think it would be timely for the district to explicitly address the learning needs of ESL teachers and students in the context of the literacy framework.

C. Staff Developers' Work With Principals

Overall, staff developers described principals as very supportive of their work. No one in our sample reported significant problems in working with principals to fulfill their roles. Similarly, Most of the principals in our sample were impressed by the quality of their staff developers' work. They appreciate the usefulness of the staff developer role, and report seeing its positive impact on teachers and students.[13] Staff developers and principals told us that they meet regularly with one another a) to discuss the staff developer's work, b) to plan whole school professional development sessions, and c) to discuss and troubleshoot problems that may be arising. Most principals reported that staff developers helped them to implement whole-school staff development, with some playing greater or lesser roles. At some schools principals also noted that they and their staff developer exchanged information about their own professional development training in order to share new knowledge and skill. We detail further some of the points that staff developers made about their work with principals.

1. **Staff developers described many principals as resourceful in getting them the time and materials they and/or their teachers needed in order to implement genre studies classes and other aspects of the Literacy Framework.** They noted that principals in some schools provided time for teachers and staff developers to work together for a full day by hiring substitutes, for example. Others found funds that could be used to purchase books needed for specialized classes.

2. **A few staff developers reported that their principals were less knowledgeable about the literacy framework than the staff developers (at least as viewed from the staff developer perspective). On occasion, principals' lack of sophistication about the Literacy Framework or genre studies course has led to some minor disagreements about how the staff developer should focus her work.** Overall, this did not sound like a frequent or very serious problem. However, it can leave staff develope.s feeling awkward about disagreeing with their principals as this staff developer notes.

   I think that the other piece that hasn't really been addressed – other than to say we know it's an issue – is the idea that principals just haven't had as much time to be trained. They don't have the luxury of the time that has been made available to staff developers. Consequently, they haven't received as much training, and don't always know as much about some of these Institute reforms. Yet they're still in control of the school. So what do you do when your principal says, "Do this," even though you know it's contrary to what the Institute is saying. This is an open issue. Staff Developer 7

   In a more positive vein, some staff developers reported that principals acknowledged learning from them as indicated in the following comment.

---

[13]Some, in noting the value of these highly skilled individuals, raised concerns about the current shortage of staff developers, which might result in a lowering of the caliber of future staff developers.

She pretty much looks to me for guidance. She admits that this is all new to her, as far as the curriculum is concerned, the framework, so she's very cooperative in working with me. She pretty much says, "What do you think we should do next? Where should we go from here?" She's supportive, and she'll listen to me. I'm thankful that she is willing to do that. Staff Developer 4

Some principals in our sample reported similar stories. We also heard about situations in which the staff developer and principal seem to have gotten different messages from their distinct professional developments. In the best circumstances, staff developers described meeting with their principals to work out the differences and agree upon a plan for moving forward.

3. **Some staff developers wonder how much and in how much detail to talk about the teachers they are coaching. Despite the agreement that staff developers will not be involved in teacher evaluation, they and their principals are aware that staff developers can come to be seen as "snitches" if they talk to principals and principals then talk to teachers about what was said about some aspect of classroom practice, for example.** Staff developers and principals must work out the delicate balance between issues of confidentiality and reasonable feedback so that the staff developer can be a productive informant for the principal and the principal can use the feedback in professional ways. In addition, in the best of circumstances, principals can help the staff developer problem-solve in difficult situations.

The confidentiality issue is tough. To be honest, I don't know what I would do if I didn't have an established relationship with my principal. I trust [the principal] implicitly. Absolutely. That makes it easier to do. For example, when I go into her office, and she asks how things are going, I tell her, "Some of the classes are going fine," or, "I'm struggling in other classes, because"--and I tell her whatever the issue may be. Then if she has to go in and follow-up and do observations in that classroom, she does that. But I think in all fairness to her as a principal, I have to tell her what's going on in classrooms. ...I do tell her if I'm struggling with a teacher, and why I'm struggling with that teacher. I tell her why I don't think that my coaching practices are effective with particular teachers. She helps me problem-solve that, which is very helpful. For example, with one teacher, who is a newer teacher on our staff, I said "I don't know what to do next week." And she said, "I want you to give that teacher some very specific things to do, and a time line for when you expect to see change in that classroom. So that's what I did. I think that that's appropriate. I don't think it oversteps the lines of confidentiality. Staff Developer 1

Our data suggest that principals and staff developers, along with the ILs in some cases, are working out how to define the boundaries of such conversations. The extent to which principals and staff developers and/or principals, staff developers, and ILs observe classrooms together depends on their judgment about how such joint activities will be perceived by teachers.

Everyone with whom we spoke seems appropriately sensitive to keeping the staff developer role focused on professional development and not on evaluation.

Our data strongly suggest that principals and staff developers are working together with the goal of improving teaching and learning in the context of the Literacy Framework. They agree on the purpose and parameters of the staff developer role and report few difficulties in implementing its early phase. Although many of the staff developers reported that they felt too much time was spent in their own professional development discussing issues related to principal/staff developer relations in light of anticipated problems, it may be that the time was well-spent given the findings about their positive relationship. On the other hand, perhaps the district underestimated the commitment of principals and teachers to the new staff developer role and, therefore, anticipated difficulties that would not materialize. Whatever the case, we believe that the relationships between principals and staff developers speaks well for their professionalism and for their commitment to the important work of school reform.

D. **Challenges to Implementing the Role of Staff Developer**

Up to this point, we have reviewed a) the selection and initial training of the staff developers, b) how they got started in their school-based work, c) the ways in which they are working with genre studies teachers and others, and d) how they and their principals work together. Throughout this discussion, we stressed the many positive aspects of implementation and noted areas in need of additional attention – for example, working with ESL teachers and attempting to draw links between the various components of reform. In this section of the report, we focus on two broad issues that pose additional challenges to the staff developers: a) the time available for staff developers to do their work, and, b) their need for additional strategies for helping teachers make fundamental changes in their practice. We explore these challenges while keeping in mind the significant progress that the district and the individual staff developers have made in implementing this role.

We also explore these challenges in the context of what many describe as the district's increased sense of urgency about school reform. The sense of urgency leads everyone to understand the importance being placed on implementing the new literacy practices. It also leads many principals, teachers and some staff developers to feel pressure to do more than they feel may be possible in a short period of time without creating teacher burnout or at least considerable frustration and exhaustion. The sense of urgency contributes to the pressures of time that the staff developers report. It contributes to their questions about how to produce fundamental teacher change in a short period of time. We turn next to an elaboration of these two challenges.

1. **Challenges Associated With Time**. Earlier in this update report we noted that staff developers who worked in two schools described limitations on their work that were associated with this organizational arrangement. However, even staff developers who work in one school described considerable difficulty doing all that they are expected and want to do in the time available. What are the ways in which time constrains their work?

A) **Some staff developers reported that it is difficult for them to find time to conference with teachers immediately after an observation or demonstration lesson.** Time delays, they believe, reduce the effectiveness of their feedback.

When I go in teacher's rooms to do model lessons, I try really desperately to meet with them ahead of time, and to meet with them after, as soon as possible. Because what I've found [is that if we] talk the next day, it is so frustrating because so much happened, that I don't get to discuss things in a fresh way, where my mind is really accurate in what I wanted to say and [so is] hers. The biggest, biggest, biggest hindrance to my effectiveness has been lack of time for teachers to debrief or reflect even. Staff Developer 12

B) **Several staff developers noted that it was difficult for them to garner sufficiently large blocks of time in which to do effective whole staff professional development.** Those who worked in schools that did not have minimum days, in particular, found it difficult to implement this aspect of their role. However, even with minimum day schedules, the issues of time remained salient. This is because time allocated for professional development may be used for something else. And, according to the staff developers, the district requires them to spend 90% of their time in classrooms, while also stipulating that they are not to use any of the remaining time for reading professional materials that might be necessary for their own professional development and improved implementation of their roles.

One of the significant drawbacks to my position is that in our job descriptions we are told, "You need to spend 90 percent of your time in the classrooms." Well I'm not just a peer coach, I'm also the staff developer. In order to do good staff development, I have to spend time planning and researching. I don't have a person to delegate to. I really have to do this [professional development work] hands on. It has to be coming from me....So that's taken a lot of time. When I do the 90 minutes in the classrooms, then the staff development portion suffers. When I have to focus on the staff development, because I have a presentation to do, then the 90 percent suffers. There's no way to balance the two effectively. Staff Developer 3

C) **A number of staff developers described how the scheduling of literacy blocks in the morning made it difficult for them to get to all teachers as often as they would like.** Even when they agreed that having literacy in the morning was likely to be a good idea, they regretted the impact of the scheduling on their work.

D) **Staff developers who work in schools with large numbers of new teachers reported that they have to spend a great deal of time helping with new teacher issues such as classroom management strategies.** They recognize that

without these skills, new teachers will be unable to implement the literacy framework components. However, they also recognize that spending time in this way leaves them without time to focus new teachers on their literacy work.

There's no way that we're getting to guided reading until spring, if then. It would be putting the cart before the horse. I think it's much, much harder to do than shared reading and the idea that they can somehow, in the space of a few months, go into putting students into groups by ability. It's too much. I think that would really cause a revolt or it would just be done extremely badly. Staff Developer 7

E) Many staff developers report that they do not have time to help all of the teachers who want their help. This is true even for staff developers who spend four days in a school. They find that some teachers want them to spend more time in their classrooms. They find that other literacy teachers and some content teachers want help implementing some of the literacy strategies. Although this is frustrating at times to the staff developers, we think it is good news. It indicates that the position, by virtue of the people in it and the knowledge and skill they have available, are needed by their schools. At the same time, the demand implies that it may be necessary to have even more literacy support in the schools than the time currently available from the staff developers. Interviews with ILs suggest that they are aware of the need for more staff developers on many of the middle school campuses in the district.

2. **Challenges Associated With Changing Teachers' Practices**. At the outset, staff developers focused on genre studies teachers who were willing to work with them and, as time permitted, with other teachers who wanted the help that staff developers could provide. As a result, staff developers did not bump up against a great deal of resistance to their work. However, they ran into some. For example, a teacher who was willing to have the staff developer model a lesson, might not remain in the room during the lesson. Or, a teacher who was given suggestions by the staff developer, might not choose to try them. Nonetheless, several months into their roles, they recognize that before long, they will have to begin working with some teachers who are overtly resistant to their efforts. They wonder what this will be like and how they will address the situations. Staff developers now also have more sophisticated knowledge about what might be involved in helping a teacher change her practice even when she wants to make changes. We turn now to a brief discussion of each of these issues.

A) **Staff developers wonder how, in the future, they will work with teachers who say, "this too will pass," or who seem uninterested and unmotivated to learn new knowledge and skill.** Staff developers worry about how they will work with teachers who do not fully understand the Literacy Framework and its links to standards, and who appear to be comfortable using the practices they have always used. They also worry about how they will work with veteran teachers

who have been deemed "expert" by their colleagues, but who do not use the literacy framework to guide their instruction.

Especially the ones who are strong teachers, and it's not that they're not good teachers, they are. But they don't want to change. I think that that's been a real challenge [for some teachers], to try something new and to give up the core curriculum that you've been teaching and that you had your lessons made for, and you had your program. The idea of choice and different levels and teaching specific strategies, the readers, is different. Staff Developer 11

Staff developers wonder what knowledge, skill and authority they will need to create a positive context in which they strongly encourage such teachers to use new strategies.

B) **Staff developers find it challenging to help teachers change fundamental teaching practices and teaching knowledge.** They realize that their role is not to tell the teachers what to do. They understand that they may need additional knowledge and skill themselves to be successful helping other teachers change. Even staff developers who have worked in other kinds of teacher leadership positions wonder about how to help teachers change their practices, as this staff developer reports.

My problem is I can't say, "If you do it my way, you'll succeed." As a mentor, [I might have said,] "Come here, and let me show you how to do it." But my job as a staff developer is not telling you how to do it. It is to help you see how you can do it. That's a whole different thing. So I'm trying to pull it [the new practices] out of someone. Pull it out of them, [so that they see] that, yes, their answers are there. They just have to discover them themselves. The questioning [skills required] are probably the most difficult, figuring out which questions to ask of which personality at what time, to let them see what needs to be done. Sometimes they'll say, "I don't know. You tell me." I'll say "Well, this is how I see it. You can take it or not." ...As a staff developer, my job is not to tell them. My job is to let them do their thing within the framework that we've been given. So that's the hardest thing for me. I have to be there to help them discover themselves. That's what I've learned. I'm helping them discover who they are, where they need to go. Staff Developer 13

The issue of how or whether to support teacher capacity development becomes acute in schools that have large number of new teachers and high teacher turnover. As this staff developer points out, there are trade-offs to consider in such circumstances. And the benefit of one approach over another is not clear.

I think issues are somewhat different for a school like [this one]. The Institute is saying, "You have to develop the capacity in teachers, because teaching is a hard

job. You [the teacher] need to interact with your students, and understand where your students are in order to facilitate their growth." And to do that, you have to have a strong teacher in the classroom. That's the Columbia Teachers College model. The other model is the "Teachers aren't capable of handling their students, so be on Page 3, Hour 2, Day 4" type thing. In a school like [this one], our concern is our teachers jump ship. They leave, because this is a harder community to teach in....So, given that teachers aren't here for a long time, and that it takes a while to develop the capacity in teachers, there is a struggle between this idea of providing the capacity versus providing the structure. Staff Developer 7

Whatever route they take, staff developers realize that they have to accomplish their work in a context that a) stresses the urgency of reform, and b) is looking for rapid improvement in student outcome data. Staff developers wonder how much time the district thinks it should take to accomplish this task with a large number of teachers. And, staff developers wonder what the expectations for their work will be in contexts where teachers are not willing participants in their own development. The next staff developer reflects the considerable thought that some have given to the challenges that face them. She comments on what she thinks must be in place if the staff developer is to have the opportunity to be successful.

*I thought about that a lot, and I think it comes down to three things; **depth of knowledge** in their content area, and in the case of learning, about the literacy framework. **The interest to learn it, and the motivation to do so.** If they don't have the knowledge and the interest and the motivation to seek out that knowledge, it's really hard to work with those teachers....Sometimes they're not interested in knowing. They don't care. They think it's going to go away. And that's a struggle. Staff Developer 1*

Staff developers, like teachers, know what qualities they desire in their "students." They also know that, like teachers, they have no control over the individuals they are charged to teach. They are willing to take on the challenge of helping all teachers to improve their practice through adopting the components of the Literacy Framework, but they are not sure they know how to do this with every teacher on their campus.

The challenges staff developers face arise out of a growing need and demand for their services and out of their growing awareness that they will need increased knowledge and skill to take on the next phases of their work. We turn to the ways in which they are learning what they need to know in the formal professional development in which they participate.

E. The Value of Ongoing Professional Development for Staff Developers.

Every Friday, staff developers K-12 gather together for professional development organized by the Institute. The Friday sessions are intended to forge a cohort of staff developers who share a body of knowledge and skill and an orientation and commitment to the Literacy Framework.

The sessions are also intended to enhance staff developers' knowledge and skill to help them become more effective in their roles. The staff developers with whom we spoke shared many perspectives on the Friday sessions. Overall, they reported that the sessions were important and valuable. Some, they described as terrific, others as missing the mark and of little merit. Staff developers agreed that the most valuable sessions were those that a) were targeted at literacy in the middle schools, b) inspired them to keep on with their work, and c) enabled them to understand the "big picture" of reform in the district.

They reported that, at the outset, they found too many of the sessions geared to elementary school teaching situations. This is changing, however, with the advent of break-out groups by school level and by including expert presenters who are skillful in middle school literacy. Staff developers reported that the Friday sessions led by outside speakers were excellent. Those provided by district professionals were described as less vibrant and useful. Within our sample of staff developers, some were more tolerant of this professional development provided by Institute staff. They pointed out that Institute staff, much like themselves, were learning as they go. Others were more critical of this situation. Staff developers appreciate Kris Rodenberg's leadership, noting that as a former middle school teacher, she is quite sensitive to their specific issues.

Staff developers were in reasonable agreement about what would improve their opportunities to learn in the Friday sessions. We review staff developers' perspectives on their own professional development and what would likely improve it.

1. **Staff developers reported that their Friday professional development days have had the power to inspire as well as teach.** The extent to which professional development has been successful in this vein has depended on the knowledge, skill, and delivery of the individuals who have led the sessions. In particular, we want to note that staff developers value first-hand information from Tony Alvarado. They recognize that Institute staff convey his messages to them, but they argue persuasively that direct interaction is more powerful and ought to happen more often.[14]

   We had Tony Alvarado there [last week]; [it was a] very powerful experience. I wished, [after] hearing him speak for two hours that he had come in the beginning. It was the first time we heard him directly address us. His content knowledge, his background in this field is so clear and so grounded in practice. He must have used at least 20 analogies in the course of his speaking. He really has such an embedded vision that I got it. And I think the clear overview of the whole picture really hasn't come into play until recently for us as staff developers. It was being translated to us. Having him there was really powerful in really getting that [overview picture] together. Staff Developer 12

[14]Principals in our sample also reported on the powerful impact of their interactions with Tony Alvarado during their professional development meetings.

We talked [with Tony] about the urgency, we talked about classroom visitations, we talked about our role and how much of an impact we are making and what we can make. Because, if you look at the framework, maybe 5 percent of the framework has been realized, so we have a long way to go, but we are beginning to make a real impact on the district, students, teachers. So it was reassuring to have him speak to us, because we only heard him speak a couple of times, and it was mainly when the principals were there, and then it was one time, at the very beginning of all this. But I think [Tony] realizes we want to see him more often, because we are his troops--I mean, really, we need that contact. We want to know [about the reform] straight from the horse's mouth. Because [otherwise]we feel a little bit on the fringes. We want that personal contact. And I think every peer coach there will tell you the same thing. Staff Developer 10

Staff developers, indeed, are the front lines of reform in San Diego and, we think they are correct in wanting to have direct contact with the leader of that reform.

2. **Staff developers report that the outside experts who explicitly help them work on literacy in the middle schools have been enormously helpful. In particular, they note the importance of Janet Allen to their work.**

I think for some people [the summer training] was really good, especially for secondary people, who had no experience with literacy. And then we had the ongoing training, which has been even better. They had people coming in from all over. They had some New Zealanders and Australians who came and did some work with us, and explained more in detail about shared reading and balanced literacy. The most helpful person for secondary in my opinion has been Janet Allen, who is coming back again. She did some work with us, and for secondary teachers it was like "Okay! Someone who speaks to us." Janet Allen has done this with high school kids, and she really speaks from experience. She can show you how to organize, so that's been really valuable. She's excellent, and her books are good. Staff Developer 11

3. **Most staff developers report that they would like to have a) more time to work with other middle level staff developers during their Friday meetings, b) the opportunity to influence the agenda of the Friday sessions, and c) evidence that the Institute leadership values their input and considers them capable of shaping some aspects of their own development.**

With respect to their opportunities to work with one another, staff developers report that the Institute is trying to be responsive.

I'm finding it more effective as they have allowed us time to separate elementary from secondary. At first, we were all together, and I'm not saying that the things weren't good. But shared reading at the middle school level looks extremely

different than it looks at the elementary level, and with an elementary background to help me, the way I do shared reading in the 1st grade class is so different than I do [it] at the 6th, 7th, or 8th. I mean the premise is the same; the physical text, one focus, but I don't need to see all that, and I've seen a lot of it. But we're more a split, not all the time, but maybe half of the day, they'll say "Okay. Middle school people here. You go work on that. And that's been wonderful. Staff Developer 9

At the same time, some staff developers report that Institute staff seem worried that they will lose control of important staff development opportunities by allowing them to work in smaller groups or use their professional development time in individual pursuits. Staff developers feel, in a sense, that they are not trusted to act as professionals, as these two comments reveal.

The Fridays when we're just the group of staff developers and the literacy staff, it's kind of amazing to watch. The same issues that we talk about with teachers [arise]. With teachers we talk about the idea that it's very hard for a lot of teachers to let go of that control element, provide the structure still, but let go of the control and let the students really go at their own pace. I observe the same thing between principal and teachers on campus....The same thing is happening between the Institute and us. They are very scared to just let us have groups where we get together, and read and talk. They've started to think about that. They did take a survey, "If we were to have study groups, what would you be interested in doing?" Unfortunately, frequently it's still a whole group [session]. Staff Developer 7

I have a stack of books probably as tall as me in terms of professional reading that they are asking me to do. And when am I supposed to do it? We have four days that we are supposed to make up, because they didn't start us early enough in order to fill the fiscal year. We asked, "Can we do some professional reading during those four days?" "No." I don't know if that's a trust issue, but I would have thought that would have been a perfect time to do that, and that was not something that they allowed us to do. Sometimes I think the people on top and at the Institute level have a little bit of difficulty allowing us a little bit of that freedom. That's just a personal opinion; I would like to see them open up a little bit more. Staff Developer 3

Staff developers also point out that they need some differentiated staff development. They agree that, at the outset, it was important for all of them to participate in training that provided a common set of understandings about literacy and about their role. Now that they have experience implementing the role, however, they argue that they are aware of learning needs that they may not have in common with all other staff developers.

I need some stronger staff development. The problem for me that we're getting information, that not all the coaches need. I don't need 12 sessions on shared

reading. [But] there are some things that I really, really need, and it's not on the schedule right now. I need it now, and I'm going to need it later, but I really, really need it now. I want stronger training in coaching. How do you deal with those tough issues? What do I say to that teacher who walks out when I'm modeling a lesson? Let me work on that. Let me wrap my head around that whole idea, if you will. That takes some talking and some thinking about. You can't just say, "Well, say this to that teacher." It needs to be a part of what I do....I think that in terms of staff development training, we need to talk about change theory, and what are some of the things that we see happening, and what research can we use to help us understand. Staff Developer 1

Staff developers' individual experiences have given them insights into what they need to know to improve their work. They report that the Institute has provided them with the opportunity to participate in some differentiated professional development in small groups with the caveat that all of the small groups focus is on literacy. We agree with staff developers who say that more literacy may not be what they need. It would be useful for the Institute staff to consider how it can respond to the defined needs of the "front line" leaders of the reform without compromising their understandable need to focus on issues of literacy.

Finally, staff developers report that when they do work together as a middle level group, they share insights and strategies that help them with their work.

[It's] a great help. Being able to dialog with other peer coaches has been extremely helpful. To hear their stories, to share their ideas, that's been very good. Staff Developer 9

One nice thing about having those weekly meetings is the ability to do that, to talk with my colleagues. I do wish that they [in the Institute] would trust us a little more to do that. Staff Developer 3

We think that the Institute would do well to think about its orientation to staff developer professional development and the extent to which it reflects what is known about high quality professional development. The Institute wants and needs to create a learning community among the staff developers. The high quality of the outside experts brought in to coach the staff developers has provided powerful learning, however, we are not sure that the Institute's own set of professional development strategies are leading it in that direction. Currently, there is reasonable agreement among the staff developers that the Institute leadership is learning while it is leading.[15] Staff developers understand this and are tolerant of it for the time being. After a while, however, given the nature of their work, staff developers will likely have more expertise at coaching than the Institute staff who are providing their professional development sessions. The group of staff developers selected at the outset reflect high levels of knowledge, skill, and commitment. These attributes can inform the work of the Institute. Creating a learning

[15]This is the same point we made in an earlier report about the ILs vis a vis the principals.

community of staff developers and Institute leaders is one way to address the evolving learning needs of staff developers, while utilizing their experience and expertise to build on the Institute's strengths. To date, in light of the data we have collected, we do not see evidence that the Institute is taking advantage of what its group of staff developers has to offer.

We have similar concerns about the professional support and learning opportunities ILs provide to principals. There is considerable frustration among principals that the district is failing to understand that many issues other than literacy and instruction (e.g., student health and social service issues, discipline, violence, budgets, facilities) comprise a large part of their day-to-day work lives. Although ILs have expanded their focus to include some administrative issues like budgets, principals note that none of these issues can be ignored as if they did not exist. They are looking to the district to provide them with appropriate support and a venue for discussing these issues so that they can focus their efforts on implementing the literacy framework.

In addition, while there is considerable variation in the leadership styles of the ILs and their relationships with principals, many principals expressed concern about what they perceive as the top-down, punitive approach to reform at this point in time, and the limited flexibility and autonomy which the district allows them. Principals report, for example, that while they appreciate the district-wide focus on literacy and are committed to implementing the literacy framework in their schools, they would like the district to respect their professional judgement and to give them the freedom to determine how this implementation might best be accomplished in the particular contexts of their schools. There is a perception among some principals that their own expertise is not valued by the district, resulting in a sense of frustration and a drop in morale. Interrelatedly, principals indicate that they would like the district to show some appreciation for and recognition of accomplishments that schools are achieving in programs and content areas which do not fall under the literacy framework so that all involved in educating San Diego's children can feel that their work is valued.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER IMPLEMENTAT ION OF THE STAFF DEVELOPER ROLE

At the beginning of this update report we wrote that the data we collected and analyzed demonstrate a very successful initial implementation of the staff developer role at the middle school level from the perspectives of staff developers and principals. We think the data we presented support this conclusion. Throughout the report, we highlighted strengths of early implementation and areas in need of further attention. In particular, we noted a) the importance of helping teachers understand the links between the Literacy Framework, the standards and the portfolio, and b) the importance of addressing the needs of teachers who work with students learning English as a second language.[16]

---

[16]We think the needs of students when they are in ESL classes should be addressed as well as the needs of students who have been mainstreamed into English language classes.

We do not have any direct information of the impact of the important work being done by the staff developers, but we do have principals' and staff developers' views on their work. Since both sets of individuals have a vested interest in the positive implementation of the Literacy Framework, one might think that their views on its implementation would be suspect. However, we think their perceptions of the impact of the staff developer role and the Literacy Framework reflect serious consideration of the work going on in their schools. It would not be in principals' interests, in particular, to laud the work of the staff developers if their work was ineffective or even counterproductive given that principals are being held accountable for the quality of implementation by their IL. Therefore, we present principals' and staff developers' views of the impact of their work with reasonable confidence.[17]

Principals and staff developers overwhelmingly describe the focus on literacy in their schools in a positive light. Many see the impact that effective implementation of the framework is having on students, reporting, for example, that students' attitudes toward reading and learning are changing, students' self-esteem is rising while discipline problems are decreasing, and the quality of student work is improving. Many principals report, as do the staff developers, that teachers are also excited about the changes that they are seeing, and that in some cases teachers' perceptions of the capabilities of lower-achieving students are also changing. Staff developers note the kind of evidence that encourages them in their work. In doing this, they point out their growing realization that even with the urgent context of San Diego, genuine change will take some time.

> *I find it most rewarding when a teacher says, "I get it," or "I tried this, and it worked," or, "I tried it and it didn't work." Because then I know that they're reflecting. I also find it most rewarding when they're talking to each other, and I can get a sense of a community of learners growing amongst ourselves. That inspires me....Some days I feel totally overwhelmed, and other days I feel totally inspired. Making the kind of huge changes that I think our district is looking at implementing is very noble and necessary. The "how" of it is very challenging. [But] I can feel it starting to root, and even though it's incremental at first, and it's hard to see evidence, I can feel just especially in the last two weeks a flavor at our own school of it starting to root. Staff Developer 12*

> *To have a teacher realize that they can do so much more with the same materials. That, for me, is very, very rewarding. You can see the excitement and the desire to try new things, just because they're sure it's going to work. It's also very rewarding for me to see the kids take ownership of their learning. All of a sudden they have the ideas, the skills, the strategies, and they are working together in teams to try to actually improve their achievement. Staff Developer 6*

> *Our staff is pretty much open and trying. They want to do what needs to be done. If they do have some [negative] feelings, which I'm sure some of them do because*

[17]We will modify these views, as needed, after speaking with teachers later in the spring.

there's a lot of stuff that's coming down from the Institute that has to be implemented in the classroom, [I don't hear them]. It's a paradigm shift. So for secondary people who have done it this way for so long [who hear], "Now I've got to do it this way," they feel maybe devalued. If they have these feelings, which I know are normal, they don't voice them. They may mumble and grumble and whine a little bit, but they move. It's taking time. Staff Developer 13

I'm learning myself to be patient. It's been a professional as well as personal growth on my part. It's taking time. I don't think I realized that [it would take time] at the very beginning. I came in thinking, "Oh, people are going to love this. It's great. It's new and it's just another way to reach kids." Like Pollyanna, you know? And now it's like, "Okay. Reality." Then I was getting overly stressed about it, thinking, "What am I doing wrong?" Then I realized that it's a time factor. That part of it was a revelation to me. Staff Developer 10

Staff developers use these and other indicators to determine whether they are having an impact. We think it is important to note that neither they nor the principals who will evaluate them have guidelines/indicators/or benchmarks from the Institute that could help them figure whether or not they are adequately fulfilling their roles. We think it is essential that the Institute, perhaps in collaboration with a group of principals and staff developers develop an instrument that can be used to evaluate their work. Such an instrument should provide feedback that would highlight staff developers' strengths and areas in need of further professional development. This information could also help the Institute as it considers providing differentiated professional development. And, the instrument should be pertinent to making summative decisions about staff developers' performance.

While the current reforms are still in the beginning stages, we are impressed with the significant progress that has been made in a very short period of time. The potential of the staff developer role for facilitating the implementation of more powerful instruction is extremely promising. It will, however, be important for the district leadership to address the principals' concerns, discuss the need for the current approach, and outline the school-based indicators they might use as evidence that the schools could begin to take responsibility for implementation and adjust the emphases to best meet the needs of their students.[18] In the same way that everyone needs to understand the links between the Literacy Framework, the standards, and the portfolios, everyone needs to understand the links between the current centralized organization of reform and the ultimate vision of what continuously improving schools will look like in San Diego.

[18]Some of these issues were addressed by Elmore and Burney in a paper they wrote about reform in District 2 in New York. (Continuous Improvement in Community District #2, New York City. December 1998)

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC Educational Resources Information Center

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

TM035291

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Update Report: Implementing Standards-Based Reform in San Diego City Schools, Feb. 2000	
Author(s): Barbara Neufeld, Yuri Kuwahara, Judy Swanson	
Corporate Source: Education Matters, Inc	Publication Date: February 2000

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1 ↑ [X]

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) *and* paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A ↑ [ ]

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B ↑ [ ]

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Barbara Neufeld	Printed Name/Position/Title: Barbara Neufeld, President
Organization/Address: ~~Barbara Neufeld~~ Education Matters, Inc. 50 Church St. ~~Cambridge, MA 02138~~	Telephone: 617-234-4353 FAX: 617-492-7822
	E-Mail Address: bneufeld@edMatters.com Date: 9/17/03

(Over)

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

University of Maryland
ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation
1129 Shriver Lab, Bldg 075
College Park, MD 20742
Attn: Acquisitions

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

University of Maryland
ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation
1129 Shriver Lab, Bldg 075
College Park, MD 20742
Attn: Acquisitions